1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

the money weekly to his wives for petty market purchases and does all major purchases of food and clothing on his own. He also pays for ceremonies, transportation, and most of the gift-giving engaged in by himself and others in the household. Except for the sale of cooked food, pottery production, and female hair dressing, men control all income producing work of any kind in the entire society.

Households as Consumers

Almost all people in Bornu use, obtain, or eat the things they need because they are members of particular households or are related to a nearby household as a subordinate of its household head. The patterns of consumption vary enormously from that of a rural peasant to that of a wealthy trader or political leader in the city. However, the vast bulk of the population stays within a fairly uniform range that involves a relatively low level of consumption. Most families, especially those in rural areas, eat two meals a day; one between 8:00 and 9:00 A.M. and the other in the early evening between 8:00 and 9:00 P.M. Men of the compound and their male friends eat together while the women eat separately. Smaller snacks are eaten during the day, and in the city it is common to eat more often especially among salaried workers who return home for breakfast about 9:00 to 9:30 A.M. and finish the work day at 2:00 to 2:30 P.M. at which time they eat a noon-day meal. The average rural household consumes about eight pounds of millet (the staple grain food) every day, or about one and a half tons per year. The millet comes from farm products used by the household plus any buying that has to be done to augment this. For those few at the higher end of the social scale food bills can be enormous. One political leader in the capital claims that during his heyday he used to feed as many as seventy people a day and had to have a very smoothly-running household to get this much food processed and ready for his guests on a daily basis. In the ordinary peasant household men give their wives money on a weekly basis to purchase condiments for the staple food and sometimes meat as well although many of the richer men prefer to buy meat themselves. The money, usually anywhere from thirty cents to about $1.50 is given to the wife, or to each wife, or sometimes to the senior wife who then divides it among the co-wives.[1]

To an outsider Kanuri food seems almost infinitely expandable. I have often watched one bowl of food brought into the presence of a household head. He would glance around at the half dozen or so of us present and then ask us to join him, as he had to do by custom. On the other hand household heads have complained to me that they feed too many. "But what can we do?" they say, friends and would-be clients or subordinates know when food is to be brought, and they simply appear, at which point custom forces the host to be gracious. Those who eat continually at a friend's or a relative's house are in his debt and he may use their services as he wishes. This is one of the principal means by which clientship starts to operate. If the client eats with the patron, and the patron asks for services, and if both are satisfied, the relationship soon becomes an established one.

Clothing, like food, is in the hands of the household head although, and as

[1] Nigerian money is in pounds, shillings, and pence. I have translated values here at the rate of $2.80 American to £1 Nigerian.

433 economic situation in Bornu is determined to a large extent by
439 changes in the world market price of export items which are now
423 a vital part of the local economy. The Kanuri are an agricul-
241 tural people whose staple crop is millet. Along with millet,
the main crop is peanuts, grown for sale and ultimate export.
[241] Every farmer grows millet for his family. Should he have a
[438] surplus he sells it in the local markets. Most farmers also
244 raise peanuts as well. The nuts are bought by local trading
[442] companies, acting as agents for the government controlled
[655] Groundnut Marketing Board which buys the entire crop and
[439] sells it on the world market. Cow hides and sheep and goat
433 skins are also brought by the trading companies for export,
237 and represent an important part of the total economy. The West
439 African Pound is the basic currency unit and the shilling is
436 the unit of trade in the remotest sections of the province.
Maria Theresa dollars are still in evidence but are rarely used
as currency.

439 A network of European trading companies exists throughout
442 Northern Nigeria. Almost all of them have canteens run by
473 European agents scattered in larger towns throughout the region.
The largest of these is the United Africa Company, a subsidiary
of Unilever. Others, John Holt and Co., Société Commerciale du
Oest Afrique, Compagnie Française du Afrique Occidental, and A.
G. Leventis and Co., are multi-million-dollar companies with
[852] head offices in England or on the Continent. They all buy pea-
nuts, and hides and skins, and they buy through a complex system

583 Marriage is effected through the payment of a bride-price, the luwaliram, before the marriage proper. There can be no marriage without payment of the luwaliram. The luwaliram is conceived of as money for buying a wife. One informant stated, "It is just like buying a ram. Your children are the profit [85] (ribe) of your investment." It follows, of course, that among [436] the Kanuri, children belong to the father. At present, the luwaliram is always paid in hard currency--pounds and shillings, though in former times it was paid in Maria Theresa dollars (nursus) which served as currency in the area.

The amount of the luwaliram varies with a number of factors. Luwaliram varies with social class, with urban and rural differences, and with the qualities of the bride-to-be. For common folk (talaka), it may run to five or six pounds. In the smaller, isolated villages it runs higher, occasionally over ten pounds. A Lowan may pay as much as ten to twenty pounds for his son's bride; very poor folk in the towns may pay as little as three pounds. Luwaliram for a very pretty girl, for the daughter of a kantuoma (aristocrat), or of a very wealthy man, is naturally high; while that for an ugly girl, or one who has undesirable traits, or who is no longer a virgin (bati) is conversely low.

583 593 If the boy is old enough to have accumulated money of his own, that will go towards his luwaliram, but the bulk of it is given by his father. The boy's father, or the head of the house in which he grew up, should he have grown up in a household

583 by Maliki law. Premarital bride-service is not permitted in lieu of the luwaliram. A man would be ashamed to go to his future father-in-law to say that he had no money to pay the luwaliram.

584 The girl is represented by her luwali in arranging a marriage. The luwali may be a relative or friend of the girl, but not her father (except in the case of a sadaka marriage noted above). The luwali states the amount of the luwaliram. The bridegroom may also be represented by someone, or he may make his own arrangements. The bridegroom, or his representative, may accept the stated price, or he may bargain for a lower price. The luwaliram is given to the luwali, who in turn passes it to [431] the girl's father. The girl's father gives a token fee to the luwali, gives presents to the groom which include both money and clothing, and gives his daughter household utensils and jewelry.

583 At the time of marriage, an additional payment, <u>sədagu</u> [430] (Arabic, sadak), is made. Sədagu is paid in the form of Maria Theresa dollars, two to five being the average amount of sədagu payment, though now eight shillings may be substituted for each Maria Theresa dollar. The size of the sədagu is arranged for before the marriage, and initial payment of part of the sədagu [586] may be made before the marriage. Should a couple divorce before the entire sədagu has been paid, the difference must be paid at the time of divorce.

Finally, in addition to both luwaliram and sədagu, there is still a third type of payment, called <u>məri</u>, which must be

565
556 The Kanuri have long had markets and used money, but the use of
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437 money is limited to certain spheres of Kanuri culture. Money
[425] is used primarily as a medium for the exchange of goods. Its use has just begun to be extended to certain types of land, as noted above, but not all land can be freely bought and sold.
46 Similarly, a man's labor is not usually hired according to
556 Kanuri custom. Wealth, therefore, can be acquired through eco-
565 nomic activities in the market, but the means for doing this are largely limited to the exchange of goods at a profit. A man cannot acquire greater wealth by using his previously acquired wealth to buy land, and then use the land which he has bought to further increase his wealth. Nor can he directly exploit the labor of other men by paying a cheap price for labor, and selling the products resulting from the labor of others at
46 a profit. Labor, as explained in the section on the Kanuri
556 household, is what one must do for one's household head; the
592 head in return must provide for household members in various
565 ways. Sheer accumulation of greater and greater wealth would not be possible, since the household head must constantly expend his resources to maintain his social position and to satisfy the expectations of the members of his household.

554 Respect or prestige (Kanuri: <u>bərzəm</u> or <u>dareja</u>) is a qual-
565 ity assigned to different positions in a society according to the cultural values of that society. Individuals of high prestige are expected to behave in certain ways, and failure to do

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439 There is some information on a copper trade which the Kanuri middlemen carried on between Darfur in the east and the Nupe area of the Niger river in the west.(1) Contacts with southern people although most often channelled through Kano were sometimes made directly in the trade carried
175 on for the much desired kola-nut. Finally, slavery was a specialized
567 trade from which political figures had a ready source of income. The slaves were often sold locally through middlemen although there was an eager market for them across the desert in Tripoli, Tunis and Cairo.

175
436 Currency seems to have come rather late to Bornu as compared with some of the other Sudanese countries. Certainly the nobles and large traders knew of its use in the early 19th century, but the Kanuri peasant had not taken up the customs of currency use that were prevalent amongst his contemporaries in other places such as Kano and Zinder at the time. In the 1820's Clapperton noticed that it was not until he arrived at Kaka-gum, on the way to Kano from Bornu, that cowrie shells were being used as currency. Although he did notice that rolls of cloth from native weavers could be used as currency in some of the Bornu markets.(2) By 1850 the rolls or strips of cloth (gaba'a) were being slowly replaced in Bornu by the cowrie shell.(3) Amongst the traders and the upper classes, both Maria Theresa and Spanish dollars were available for use as money and were even seen in limited use in the Kuka market in the 1850's. However Barth's most revealing passage in this respect tells of his difficulty in buying food from the rural peasants who came to market and refused to have anything to
[437] do with the currency. In order to buy grain, it was necessary for Barth to change his M. T. dollars to cowries, then buy one or more kulu'u (men's robes) and then barter this item of clothing for the required cereal. That

(1) See Arkell, A.J. 1952
(2) Denham,D. and Clapperton H; op. cit. Clapperton's Journal, p.21.
(3) Barth, H; op. cit. Vol. II, p.311.

3: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1960 MS14 Kanuri MS14

175 436 is to say, even those peasants marketing in the capital had not accepted the use of currency in 1850. Nevertheless some levels of the society must have been using the gursu (M.T. dollars) for some time, since Denham remarks that strips of cloth used for currency could be purchased in Bornu for forty to the M.T. dollar in the 1820's.(1) The market scenes observed by both Barth and earlier by Denham in the 19th century differ only slightly from those observed anywhere in Bornu today.

175 641 721 As far as can be inferred from available sources, warfare and slave raiding made the life of the common people one of uneasy tension. Being the serf of one chief might not prevent a nearby potentate from sending out a raiding party which might easily clear out an entire local area of its inhabitants. The criterion which directed slave raiding only upon pagans was often honoured in the breach, especially if a chief's debts were [701] pressing. Again local life was often broken up by the feudal service in war which peasants owed to their chiefs. We are told in the history of Bornu of armies of thousands and campaigns which were waged annually year [182] after year for generations. In discussing this point, Denham felt that warfare resulted in a very mobile society where fortunes rose and fell rapidly and life as an intrinsic value was not highly regarded.(2) People in towns and villages, he says, are often mercilessly attacked and plundered. Accounts tell how the inhabitants, in attempting to fly, were 175 727 caught by their attackers, whereupon, in most instances, the men were killed and the women and children lashed together and taken as slaves. Military men and their followers often died in droves on campaigns, widowing all their wives and concubines at one blow.

In response to this constant warfare, villages in danger would

(1) Denham, D. and Clapperton; op. cit. p. 54
(2) Ibid; p. 135

175 439 items while cloth was the largest import. However from 1925 on-
175 436 wards, groundnuts increased in importance as an export crop. The government introduced a sterling coin currency which slowly replaced the Maria Theresa dollar as the most generally accepted medium of exchange. In the annual report of 1915 there was a complaint by the Resident of Bornu that the European trading companies were not giving currency for purchases but were paying for goods in cloth which the native middlemen were then selling, sometimes at a loss, in order to obtain cash. This seems to indicate that by 1915 currency was in universal demand, and that barter trade was dying out. After some pressure by the government the European traders dropped their bartering practices and began to use the present system of cash credit.
175 441 452 The Companies advanced credit to a limited number of middlemen who then bought company goods for resale at local markets, and/or used the money to purchase export items for sale to the credit-advancing
175 441 452 563 [167] Company. At first the African traders dealing with the Companies were few and their volume not impressive. The desire of the Europeans to expand trading volume, plus the willingness and ability of Levantine traders to take larger amounts of credit, soon encouraged a small but very active minority of Arab speaking traders from North Africa, the Near East and the Sudan to enter Bornu. These acted as middlemen between the European trading Companies and the more numerous African traders. The result was that a small group of Arab-speaking traders were established in Maiduguri who absorbed a large proportion of the available credit from the European Companies and filtered it, second-hand as it were, into the economy of Bornu.

The European trade in Bornu, like that of many parts of

584 the man requests that the luwaliram payment be returned to him (as it
091 should be traditionally). Very often a man may try initially in the judicial proceedings to regain his entire investments, asking not only for the luwaliram, but a sum which includes his entire outlay of capital to date for the wedding. In such cases the position is usually just a beginning for bargaining. However, if the adjudicator can be convinced that the girl's or woman's group intended to defraud, or break faith from the very beginning of negotiations, the man might possibly be awarded more than just the luwaliram by the court. On the other hand, either party has the right of retraction before the formal wedding day ceremony (sada'a) which for the man means forfeiture of his payments, and for the woman and her group, means repayment of the luwaliram to the rejected suitor. For example, in one case observed, a man was repaid his luwaliram because a higher bidder had come on the scene.

584

585 In the early morning on the day of the wedding the groom with his male friends and relatives, along with male friends and relatives of the bride's household, meet at the household of the luwali, or at the house of a ranking person of the ward or town for the sada'a. The tendency is to use the luwali's house more among higher ranks in the city, while lower status groups and rural people generally use the
585 compound of a local ranking person. At this time the second and final
583 payment of the bridewealth, the sada'a is made. It is most commonly
[436] referred to in Maria Theresa dollars although most often paid in pound sterling. For peasant non-virgin weddings in the Magumeri area during 1956-7, the price seemed to be fairly standardized around the value of 4 M.T. dollars (28-32 shillings). The disposal of this payment is similar to that of the luwaliram.

The major part of the ceremony is given over to examining

286 [192] [521] [431] [685] desirability characteristics take up much of the leisure time discussion among adult men. Cloth or clothing is also an integral part of gift giving at marriages, circumcisions and in maintaining superior/subordinate relationships. Thieves, knowing the liquid capital nature of cloth or clothing, always steal these items as well as money, and indeed more often, since it is more common for transportable capital 436 assets to be in the form of cloth or clothing than cash. Cloth was originally a form of currency, i.e. a measure of value, and even today these items are widely used as collateral when cash loans are taken 286 from neighbours or specialist money-lenders. Cloth and clothing as an 291 item of consumption thus has wide ramifications of meaning and desirability as an object of value to the Bornu population, and forms one of the principal expenditures in a Kanuri household.

291 The robes of men and women, their yardage, quality, workmanship, embellishment, and age, reflect structural differences in Kanuri society. Men wear uni-coloured robes or work shirts, and all men have at least one robe for special occasions. Long robes are often worn over a smaller long-sleeved body length shirt, and may or may not be embroidered with various designs, each having its own standard of excellence on an ascending scale reflected in price. Women wear a long-sleeved body length robe over a cloth wrapped around the body from the waist down. Without the robe this wrap-around is pulled up to cover the breasts as well, when outside the compound. To dress up, the wrap-around becomes longer and forms a train, which is carried over the arm, and a long piece of cloth is draped over the shoulders in a sari-like fashion. Women also vary more widely in their tastes, which range from several plain colours worn at once to prints (men very rarely wear prints).

452 But credit per se plays a large part in the total economy. Thus the
441 butchers all remarked that they would buy cows during the wet season, preferably for cash. If this was not possible, they had arrangements with nomad cattle herders to take a cow on credit for a higher price, and then pay the herder after the meat had been sold. As we have seen, Ajimi's kola-nut business is run on credit. Many of the articles brought into the local market such as small manufactured goods, salt, sugar, cloth, and a host of other items are obtained on credit and payment made
452 after the sale. It is because this entire complex of trading relations
441 depends so much on credit that traditional behaviour norms of hirsum
571 and aran are applied to the economic organization. These institutionalized patterns of discipline and trust create an avenue for socially predictable behaviour without which credit relations would be impossible.

442 Credit also plays a part in the introduction of cash into
[452] the Bornu economy from the European sources of capital. The key role
[436] in this transmission is that of the sakelma (scale man) who buys the cash crop in the bush. An insight into this role may be seen in some of the interview material from Malam Mina, a wholesale salt trader, who also buys groundnuts over the scale at Magumeri during the harvest season. During November, Malam Mina, along with fifteen to twenty-five others, comes to Magumeri from the city. He sets up a grass mat shelter at the "station", near the motor road, about two hundred yards west of
[405] the town proper. The hallmark of this little colony is the scale which sits out in front of each shelter with bags of decorticated groundnuts
[443] being prepared for shipment into the city. Each shelter also has a generous supply of textiles for sale so that peasants may purchase their
[369] new cloth on the spot when cashing in the crop. The buyers also bring their city culture with them and during their short stay, morris chairs,

441 sign his name. Such skills are rare and thus he can market them to
571 obtain money and credit for trading. The result is to make his relationship to his mai gida much more specifically economic or contractual rather than diffusely subordinate.

452 Finally, it should be realized that the ultimate source of
436 Malam Kiná's cash which he gives out in Magumeri is either a European
441 trading company or a bank. Every year before harvest time money and goods go out on credit from these sources to the Levantine and African traders connected with them. These traders in turn divide up the money and goods among their followers and so on until it comes to the bush in the hands of people like Malam Kina. The Kanuri have come to depend on this yearly inflow of cash to buy their clothes, give many of their rites de passage, and to purchase an ever increasing number of manufactured import goods. The entire inflow of cash which supports these requirements is linked through a series of middlemen relationships to a half dozen European sources which are always financing the export/im-
[433] port economy. Because the Kanuri have learned to need the imports in this trade, they are now linked to a world, especially the western world economy, and are vulnerable to the policies of a very small number of large European companies, and the ups and downs of world commerce.